Manuscript: Women in Journalism

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Women in Journalism:

In a recent ten days it so happened that all of my extras concerned the experiences of women in journalism. First, came Emily Bugby at the Pen & Brush telling what it means to be an accredited reporter on the Herald Tribune. In twelve years she has worked herself to a first class position and has come to a point where her assignments are frequently important and her articles are frequently noteworthy. She must take what is given her without complaint. Most important in the last three or four years has been following Mrs. Roosevelt. She has represented the Tribune on some of the most important of Mrs. Roosevelt's junkets and is fairly acceptable both to her editor and to Mrs. Roosevelt. She is like all the women who have been associated in Washington with Mrs. Roosevelt a warm admirer. It is well established among the Washington newspaper women that Mrs. Roosevelt by her recognition of them, by her granting them a regular Press Conference has done more than has ever been done before to establish their place. The result is that newspaper women, not only in Washington, but here in New York are emphatically for our First Lady.

A unique impression of hard working, logical advancement, I got from Mildred Adams' talk on Reporting given at the Women's Round Table at the National Arts Club. Miss Adams has had important European assignments for some time. She has
reported from the League of Nations, from Spain since the War began, from England and Paris. She is thoroughly well informed on foreign affairs and has evidently used tact and intelligence in arranging an approach to important individuals. She hasn't interviewed Mussolini, strange to say. She is connected with The Times where she appears at intervals in The Magazine Section. What other work she does I do not know. Mussolini was probably left to Anne McCormick who has come to a point where practically all her articles in The Times are signed.

Careers like these are tough. The woman cannot jump into it by any kind of brilliant reporting. It is not a streak of luck to get at an important person. You have got to have background and knowledge to enable you to pull off an interview that makes The Times Magazine Section. Miss Bugby and Mildred Adams are examples of what women can do in journalism if they are patient and hard working enough quite aside from any flare for the profession.
Women in Journalism:

The most important experience of the week was serving on the Jury for the prizes the New York Newspaper woman's club gives now annually. They drew on those active in the profession for this Jury. It included Mrs. Gould, co-editor with her husband of the Ladies' Home Journal - Stanley Walker, one of the most important newspaper editors in New York and one who is credited with having developed a large number of first class journalists - Burton Roscoe and Seals, the editor of the Guild Organ. There were three classes of articles. It was clean work, very well done, but for the most part routine and unimportant. The most important to my mind, the most significant of how a woman can advance herself in the journalistic field, something like a speciality and a dignified permanent connection, was the Award which went to Mrs. Barnard of the Educational Department of The Times. This was for a two part report of the methods which are being followed in the education of the Dionne quintuplets. It was full of thoughtful analysis of the system. It could only have been done by one who understood progressive education and was able to appraise the methods at vellandar. Mrs. Barnard had been sent to get what she could about the children. She had selected her subject; she had to work long and tactfully to get at the necessary information. The presiding officer when the Awards were given out by Mrs. Roosevelt spoke of Mrs. Barnard's work as a scoop. No characterization could have been less pat.
had a well thought out plan and she carried it out under great difficulties. She got something nobody else had done, not by a dash in before somebody else, but by patient hard work. If she had not already made education a speciality she would not have had the idea or the knowledge which was necessary to carry the value of out her idea. But this idea of a scoop plays a good deal of mischief I'm afraid, I fear, among young women journalists. They are too apt to think that the ability to make a scoop is of first class importance in journalism. The ability to know what is important in the subject, to have a well thought out plan for getting that and then be able so to write to present the thing, make it important as well as interesting, are things to be worked for.

And my impression from the character of the pieces turned in for the Jury and from the instructions that were given us and in the way the whole matter was managed was that there is a good many of these young women connected with holding positions on good newspapers that think very little of ideas, of treatment, but think it is a matter of dashing out, getting there before somebody else.

On the whole, however, the way they handle their jobs gives me respect for them, so much respect that I should like to see more emphasis put by editors, by the women themselves in their Club and more emphasis put on good thinking, integrity of material, sound writing.

I felt a little doubtful about whether they were getting as large a training in these fundamentals as they should
have from the exhibit of the work of five or six graduates of the Columbia School of Journalism who in the past ten years have established themselves in good positions as money earners. These women came to the Pen & Brush at the annual reception given there to the graduates of the Columbia School of Journalism. All of the speakers were Alumni and they have all good positions but in no case are practising journalism pure and simple. Some of the ideas they advanced stand in my mind as things of which to beware.

There was a young woman who does a rather special piece of dramatic advertising on The New Yorker, a good and settled position. She attributed success entirely to friends - she is a likeable person, but she would not last long on The New Yorker if she did not thoroughly know her job. She attributed too little of her success to her diligence, tact, understanding of each particular relation, too much to personal friendly relations.

This Dale Carnegie business is one of the most mischievous things abroad at the present.

Another deplorable point was that a girl could not afford to go into journalism pure and simple because she could not make money enough at it. The one who dwelled considerably on this was a smart, clever, well dressed, confident, and rather hard youngster who is a publicity hostess at the Ritz Carlton. She looked as if she was paid well and intimidated that she was. In starting in journalism the pay is of secondary importance if the girl really desires to make a
permanent and enduring place for herself. She should begin with what she can get. The opportunity is what is important.

The young women who appeared this afternoon were all doing things that interested them. The difficulty is that once started in their field they never will come back to legitimate journalism.

In another year I am hoping that we shall present to the graduates to whom we give the tea a group of women who have made their way as Emily Bugby and Mildred Adams have done, not to speak of top notchers like D T.
Careers in the '90's:

A movement through a decade significant in strength depends on two factors. First, has it conserved the important progressive features of the movement as it existed at the beginning of the period? Has it known how to select and improve on the values of these features, to discard, minimize what is important?

Second, what creative factors has it added to the movement? How has it turned old methods dealing with the situation into something new, constructive, healthy? Take a movement for careers for women in the '90's, and what do we find. A significant date, the beginning of the '90's. Roughly speaking it is a date important as taking stock, being about the end of the first fifty years since what is known as the Woman's Movement in America took some definite form, became a movement for enlarging educational opportunities, opening trades them and professions, allowing the rights of public assembly, public voice, free circulations to women.

What had happened in the matter of the enlargement of opportunities for independent action, self-support, development into careers?

Measured by numbers, without count of the character of the occupation, one came into this period with some four million at work. This was nearly twice as many as there had been ten years before. Measured by the population it is not so
impressive. Women were to increase in the '90's up to "up to one percent"

It is in the enlargement of the field of occupation that the large impression comes in this decade.

The period fostered certain implements which were inherited, both of them not very long standing. There was the Federation of Women's Clubs, the National Council of Women, (See Rise of the City) both in their infant stages, we may say, straightened but both to be taken over by the period, enlarged.

From the permanent character these were organizations for encouraging every measure for enlarging woman's life, but they were driving forces for careers, the education and training for careers, the friends of colleges, vocational schools - many implements which would open the way for the woman who wanted by skilled trade or profession to earn her living.